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89) On the ghost word *tasniqtu* “verification” and the stone called “beginning” in Hh. XVI, 189 —

The entries *tasniqtu* “checking” in CAD T, p. 283 and AHw p. 1337 “Überprüfung” should be removed from the dictionaries. A nominal form *tasniqtu* which, if it existed, were derived from *sanāqu* “to check, control” (or better from its D-stem as the form is *taprist*), is nowhere attested in the entire corpus of Akkadian texts. The dictionary entries refer to line 189 of the lexical list UR₅.RA = *hubullu* XVI, where allegedly a stone called *aban tasniqti* “stone of verification” is mentioned. However, at a closer look it turns out that none of the two manuscripts of UR₅.RA = *hubullu* that contain this (Akkadian) entry display a corresponding spelling. The main source for entry 189 in MSL 10, p. 9 is a Neo-Babylonian school copy from Ur, published as UET 6, 406. MSL 10 (p. 9) transliterates the pertinent line as NA₄.BAL = *aban tas-niq-ti* but already the commentary on page 22, which reads *ab-nu tas-⁺hul-t[i]*, shows that the reading was emended. The + obviously indicates that the editors considered *hul* (IGI.UR) to be a scribal error for the very similar *niq* (SAL.UR). A photo of the tablet has been published on CDLI (http://cdli.ucla.edu/search_results.php?SearchMode=Text&ObjectID=P247834, retrieved on 7/11/2016). The pertinent line is line 5 on the reverse. Instead of NA₄.BALA = *ab-nu tas-niq¹* (HUL)-*t[i]* I suggest to read NA₄.BALA = *ab-nu ta-^{*}ši-^{*}ri-^{*}tu₄*. The final sign of the line is better preserved than the copy UET 6, 406 indicates, and its front part fits to TUM, not to TI. The sign read HUL should be separated into *ši* and *ri*. The RI-sign is not perfect as the lower impression of the Winkelhaken runs indeed parallel to the horizontal, and can thus easily be mistaken for a horizontal wedge. But it does not look like the UR which the copy shows; there is no visible wedge-head as expected if a second horizontal was intended.

The reading *ab-nu ta-ši-ri-tu₄* harmonizes the Ur school text with the manuscript from Emar published by D. Arnaud (*Recherches aux pays d’Aštata. Emar VI: Textes sumériens et accadiens*. Paris 1985, copy in vol. 2, p. 495, text 741990; transliteration vol. 4, p. 127, no. 553, Annexe IV). The latter displays [NA₄.BA]LA = NA₄ *ta-aš-ri- [ti]*. The stone was thus called *tašrītu(m)* “beginning” in Akkadian. Its Sumerian equivalent BALA “turn, rotation” (also of time periods) belongs to the same underlying concept map. A. Schuster-Brandis (*Steine als Schutz-und Heilmittel* (AOAT 46), Münster 2008, p. 82 and 404-405) cautiously identified the BALA-stone as schist.

The reading in MSL 10 has led to the postulation that the Babylonians used a touchstone called *aban tasniqti* “stone of verification” to test the fineness of gold (Schuster-Brandis 2008, 405 with previous literature in fn. 661). So far there is no hard proof that the touchstone technique was known in the second millennium BC. In the sixth century BC however, Babylonians (and other peoples) did use the touchstone method. It was called *pidānu* in Babylonia. *Pidānu*, which appears for the first time in the sixth century, is a loanword from Arabic *ḥm* “to test, probe, scrutinize, examine”; *ḥm* is the touchstone. So far, Babylonian texts do not disclose their word for the stone itself but only for the procedure of testing. The evidence is discussed in further detail in Kleber, *Arabian Gold in Babylonia* (forthcoming in *Kaskal* 13).

Thus, though touchstones were most likely known at the time when the manuscript of Hh. XVI from Ur was written, the lexical list does not show an innovation here. The BALA-stone was called *tašrītu* “beginning” in Akkadian, not touchstone.

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90) The use of DAH in an Old Babylonian account text — D.I. Owen published CUNES 55-01-008 as Text 1 in the Van Lerberghe AV (OLA 220), pp. 446-50. This document contains a remarkable phrase in the section dealing with barley: (21) 130 gú siki gen (22) 1 gú-šè 17 še-gur-ta (23) še-bi 2210 gur (24) 1200 še-gur ki-ba gar-ra pá-ši-mi^{ki} (25) dah! 60* gur-àm 10 gur-ta (26) še-bi 200 gur / 3610 gur guru₇-šè. The total of 3610 gur of barley entering the granary consists of 2210 gur (line 23), 1200 gur (Owen: “replacement” of Pašime), and 200 gur (line 25-26). We accept Owen’s reading of the first sign in line 25 as dah!, which he rendered “the addition”. The amount of 200 shows that this “addition” consists of 10 gur for each 60 gur. What does this calculation mean? The addition per 60 gur might be related to transport by boats of nominally 60 gur each. However, the capacity of the measure used for the shipment on behalf of Pašime was one-sixth larger than that of the receiving institution, probably by using a bariga